

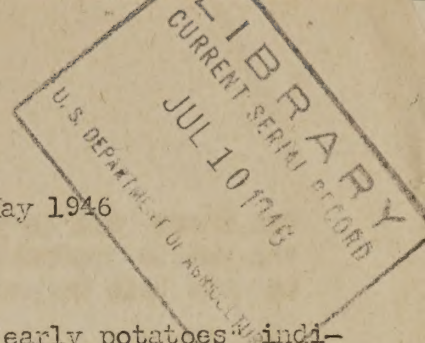
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

May 1946



Early Potato Fact Sheet

Official production estimates of what are generally known as "early potatoes" indicate a production of 52 million bushels to the end of June. Based on current crop conditions, total potato production in the early commercial States up to September 1 may establish an all-time record as high as 70 to 75 million bushels.

Practically all this volume of potatoes will be available for market before September 1, with relatively little remaining after that date. In addition to this crop we will have a large volume of potatoes from early areas in the late group of States during July and August. Commercially these will come from Long Island, N.Y., Nebraska, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, plus home-grown and market garden supplies in virtually all the other late States.

Last winter the Department recommended a goal of 52 million bushels of early potatoes but the combination of overplanting by growers and good yields now makes a record crop of 70 to 75 million bushels assured. Consumption can absorb, without extra effort, 60 to 65 million bushels. This leaves 10 to 15 million bushels that can be of untold value in filling the gap caused by the world shortage of cereals and many other food items.

Early potatoes are often harvested before reaching full maturity. Most of them probably would spoil before arrival if we attempted to ship them to famine-stricken areas abroad. But we can consume them at home as an alternative for the more readily exportable cereals. All reports indicate that the quality of this crop will be very high.

The Department's price-support program has been geared to take the low grades of potatoes off the market first in any area where support operations are started. The Department is requiring growers and shippers to agree to withhold culls and low grades from the food market when we are supporting prices.

Rail shipment alone of these potatoes from the early commercial States should total 85,000 cars between April 1 and the end of September. In addition there will be truck shipments, locally available supplies, and rail shipments during July and August from the late States.

In Southern California, the area centering around Bakersfield, will produce almost 30 million bushels of long white potatoes, making available about 35,000 carloads, most of them during May and June. Also during May, Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and North Carolina will be shipping heavily. During June, the big shippers will be those in California, Arizona, North Carolina, and Virginia, with the previously mentioned States cleaning up.

To move this big crop we must ship about 27,000 cars by rail in June alone. In July, rail shipments taper off in favor of truck shipments of the large volume of what we term "home grown." However, there will be around 14,000 cars for rail shipments.

During the next several weeks, any apparent potato shortage in a local market will be merely the result of a car shortage or rainy weather which prevents harvesting. Also, the areas from the Mississippi River east will be short of ice to protect some of the cars from deterioration.

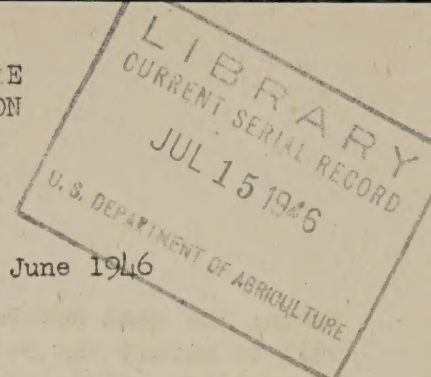
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But there will be plenty of potatoes. And it will require the maximum effort of the potato production and distribution industry, carriers, and Government agencies to move this bumper crop to market.

Every effort must be made to get this crop to the consumer and to inform the consumer of the varied uses that may be made of the potato. On this last point, the U.S.D.A. pamphlet, "Potatoes In Popular Ways," prepared by the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, should be of great assistance.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PRODUCTION AND MARKETING ADMINISTRATION
Field Service Branch
200 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing 4, Michigan



June 1946

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